

Application Story

Many UK schools take an instant tour around the Commonwealth by videoconference with the Government-backed Global Leap event

SLOUGH AND OTHER LOCATIONS. 27 MAY 2002.

Many UK schools journeyed around the world for a day of lessons via video conference (See programme on page 3). Participating UK schools took part in lessons with schools in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa to share how they are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth who became Queen 50 years ago.

Like the initial Global Leap event on 29 February 2000 described in our 15 March 2000 issue and then reproduced as a PDF file on www.global-leap.com, the Global Leap 2002 event was organised by Mike Griffith from Arbour Vale School in Slough where there is a bridge to link schools around the world in multipoint video conferences.

An outstanding programme for 2002

The Global Leap around the Commonwealth included a lesson direct from the Public Records Office in London, where children met Queen Victoria to discover what took place in 1887 when she celebrated her Golden Jubilee (an actress played the part of Queen Victoria). Pupils from Arbour Vale School in Slough dressed up in Victorian costume for this lesson.

In addition to "meeting" Queen Victoria, UK schoolchildren participating also:

- visited pupils at a **Maori catholic school in New Zealand** where they received a traditional 'haka' welcome, learnt about Maori culture and saw traditional Maori dress and art. They also discussed Sir Edmund Hillary's historic ascent of Everest 49 years ago;

- met pupils at a **school in Johannesburg, South Africa** who talked about issues affecting their daily lives, including AIDS, and answered questions about their hopes and aspirations for the future;

- Visited a school in the remote township of Makkovik in Northern Canada to speak with a remote Inuit community who are using video conferencing to bring the world into their classroom. Children learnt about life in this remote part of the world and the culture of the Inuit people. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Minister of Education, Judy Foote, also took part in this conference.

Continued

"Global Leap 2002 is not only a celebration of the Queen's Jubilee, it is also a celebration of 2 years of Global Leap's promotion of best practice for video conferencing in the classroom" commented Mike Griffith, assistant head teacher of Arbour Vale School and founder of Global Leap. "Today highlights some of the lessons that UK schools already take part in throughout the year and is a demonstration of what can be achieved in the classroom."

He continued, "The Jubilee video conferences tie in to what children are already learning in the classroom. It makes it that much more exciting as they can actually visit Commonwealth countries and meet children from all over the world also celebrating the Queen's Jubilee."

Over the last two years, UK schools have already linked up with NASA headquarters in the US and linked with an octopus expert at a marine centre in California, USA. Because a video link is interactive, children can put their questions and observations directly to the experts and discuss their answers. In doing this they increase their awareness and understanding of world cultures and current affairs. They also can improve their communication skills, presentation skills and confidence.

As part of the day's event, a spokesperson for the Department for Education and Skills launched a pioneering handbook on video conferencing in schools by live video link. **(Full story on page 8)**

About Global Leap

Founded in February 2000 by Mike Griffith, assistant head teacher of Arbour Vale School in Slough, Global Leap is a one-stop online resource that aims to promote best practice on using video conferencing in the classroom to schools around the world. At Global-leap.com teachers can get: information and practical advice on best practice for using video conferencing in the classroom; access to a global directory of video conferencing content for lessons; or set up links with other schools around the world. It also provides training, ideas, help and support to teachers on how to use video conferencing technology to enhance and develop teaching and sets up initial video conference experiences for schools exploring and developing their use of this media. Global Leap is working in association with the DfES and NGfL ■

Application Story

The Global Link 2002 Event demonstrates how videoconferencing can radically change the way in which children interact and learn



Kevin Rennie, head of ICT in Education at the DfES, links with Montgomery Combined School, Exeter, Devon while they visited Ecole Sanquer in Brittany



Pupils at Arbour Vale School, Slough dressed in Victorian costumes talk with with Queen Victoria (acted)



Pupils at Arbour Vale School, Slough, UK taking part in The Global Leap 2002 conference

The Global Leap 2002 Programme

08.00 to 10.00

Visited pupils at a Maori Catholic School in New Zealand where they received a traditional 'haka' welcome, learn about Maori culture, see traditional maori dress and art, as well as discuss Sir Edmund Hilary's historic ascent of Everest 49 years ago

Visited Australia for a presentation on reef life on the Great barrier Reef from the young volunteers at the **Reef Education Centre in Townsville, Queensland**. They also met children celebrating the Jubilee in **Wimmera, Victoria**.

10.00 to 11.00

Visited pupils at Northcliff High School located in Johannesburg, South Africa where the public health of the nation is a serious issue. During this session pupils in Johannesburg talked frankly about issues affecting their daily life and answered questions about their hopes and aspirations for the future.

11.00 to 12.00

Met with 'Queen Victoria' and asking her about her Golden Jubilee in 1887. The Public Record Office (Kew, London) arranged for an actress to play the part of Queen Victoria and answer questions. Pupils at Arbour Vale School in Slough were dressed in Victorian costumes for this lesson.

12.15 to 13.15

Kevin Rennie, a Representative from the UK, Department for Education and Skills joined school children in Devon as they spoke with the education department and ex-prisoners on Robben Island in South Africa, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned.

He also joined the conference with pupils from Montgomery Combined School **in Exeter, Devon** and Ecole Sanquer in **Brest, France**, to talk about the work they have been doing together to improve their language skills using video conferencing.

13.15 to 14.00

Visiting Makkovik in Labrador, Canada to speak with a remote Inuit community who are using video conferencing to bring the world into their classroom. Children involved in this link learned about life in this remote part of the world and the culture of the Inuit people of Northern Canada.